3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

passing away. This is true of Lane's *Modern Egyptians* for town-life in the Egyptian middle ages, and we may hope that it will in some sense prove to be true, for the long-unchanging life of the Egyptian countryside, of Father Ayrout's *The Fellaheen*. 114 121

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Besides revising the passage mentioned above, I have made some minor changes in the text or appendices, and replaced some of the statistics given in the 1938 edition by more recent figures. Once or twice I have been able to give both pre-war and war-time prices, but the changes in supply and demand during the war years have in any case divested such figures of most of their meaning. 128

The author's notes have been translated and set at the end of the book, together with a number of additional notes which seemed necessary to clarify certain points.

In transliterating from Arabic to Roman characters, I have tried to be as systematic as possible, but not to the point of discarding spellings already well established in English (e.g. fellaheen for *fellâhîn*), or varying the normal forms of names and titles. However, since Lawrence published his *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, inconsistency in transliteration is perhaps not the heinous sin it was.

HILARY WAYMENT
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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

inaccurate. Even so, they do not detract from the real value or purpose of the book, which is to present to English readers a conspectus of the magic and diablerie still common amongst the illiterate villagers of Egypt. Soon they will be lost, buried with the past, and unable to be exhumed like the relics of the dead Pharaohs.

The notes added by the translator, as well as the pagination of the original text, are given within square brackets. In the matter of the transliteration the system of the Royal Asiatic Society is generally employed, except that ḳ = ق, and ء is not transliterated except when followed by a vowel. Standardized words such as *Koran* and *Allah* I have left in that state. Colloquial forms, which abound throughout the work, are given usually as near to the current pronunciation as is needful. I have ordinarily transliterated ع by g, but I have considered it unnecessary, however, to indicate the Cairene pronunciation of the ق (ḳ) as a glottal stop. Besides hitherto unrecorded charms or magic spells, the Arabic text also contains numerous words and phrases which are not usually, or readily, found in the standard dictionaries. From a lexicographical point of view it has been considered worth while to indicate these.

The author, as Dr. Macdonald noted, "writes with the indignation of the qualified medical practitioner." The burden of his tale may well be summed up in the following lines:

> "If you have cancer or nephritis,
> Diabetes or bronchitis,
> Heart disease, tuberculosis,
> Or liver hardening with cirrhosis,
> The doctor will, for sure, detect them,
> And early treatment may correct them."

Hence he is very particular in all cases to add the canonical medical treatment as an antidote to the popular superstitious practices which he so scathingly records. He is also at pains to mention those drugs and herbs which are easily procurable by the Egyptian natives. As these sections are of no value as folklore it has been considered advisable to omit them in the interests of brevity, especially in these days of expensive

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

publication. For the same reason a number of sections in which the author rambles into the realm of politics, and the particular condemnation of the foreign occupation of the Nile Valley, have been passed over. The value of the book lies, not in these, perhaps pardonable, divagations, but in the faithfully recorded cases of popular folk-medicine and "curative" malpractices which existed, and still do exist, among the peasantry of modern Egypt.

Before the author begins his introduction on page 4 of the Arabic text, his brother 'Āmir Ismā'īl prefaces the work with two pages of explanation which may be summarized as follows. It is laudable for a man, he philosophizes, to make himself acquainted with the customs and habits of his own nation so that he may wisely choose whatever in them is beneficial. All races possess superstitious practices which they have inherited from the past, and which continue to persist because they have not been sufficiently combated. This was the reason why the author, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ismā'īl, was impelled to compile the present work in the days when he was a student in Cairo. His object firstly, was to collect instances of superstitious medical practices amongst the common people, and secondly, to denounce the village quacks and the "old wives" who traded in such things. After the work had been published in the periodical called *al-Ādāb*,[1] it was suggested that when it appeared as an independent treatise it should mention the proper medical remedies, and those herbs most easily procurable by the natives themselves. This was done but, as has already been noted above, these passages are omitted in the present translation since they are unnecessary. It has also been considered advisable to modify somewhat the rather grandiose language of the author and express the sense in a more familiar English idiom. At the same time it has been felt that it would be a pity to remove altogether the flavour of the original Arabic, and, in consequence, where the phraseology is sufficiently picturesque to justify it, the rendering is as literal as is compatible with clarity.

[1] A Cairo publication. See M. Hartmann: *The Arabic Press of Egypt*, Luzac & Co., London, 1899, page 63.

6: Rasoul--1 U-5 (no date) 1955 MR13 Fellahin MR13

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Zar in Egypt.

Kawthar Abdel-Rasoul

There is a certain ceremony called Zar among the realm of superstitious beliefs in Egypt. This belief is firstly widely disputed among the Egyptians themselves being mainly opposed by men and taking the bulk of its adherents from the masses of women, especially the uneducated ones in the country and the artisans' wives in the towns. We can say that it is certainly not nation wide, but more or less a feminine practice.

Briefly summarizing the whole idea, we can say that it is a belief in some spirits who, due to what we cannot say, secretly enter the body of the victim, establish themselves there and cannot be got rid of. The Zar ceremony is performed on those people with the purpose of soothing the spirits and persuading them not to do any harm to the possessed person.

In this paper we shall try to give a short account of the Zar-ceremony and conclude by comparing it with similar practices in the Sudan and Abyssinia.

The Elements of the Zar.

1. The Patient:

The possessed person is in most cases a woman and only rarely a man. This rule is also applicable in the Sudan and Abyssinia. The patients can be classified as follows:

(a) Women who are physically or mentally ill and have no hope to be cured by doctors or psychiatrists. As a last resource they turn to the Zar. Such a woman believes a priori that she is possessed by a spirit causing her disease and therefore nothing but the Zar can cure her of it.

(b) Women who give birth to a deformed child or whose babies are stillborn. The Zar-ceremony is performed on them in order to stop the spirits from doing any more harm to her babies.